



Meeting Minutes

Juvenile Justice Statewide Improvement Planning Grant Task Force

Tuesday, March 6, 2018 2-4 pm

12th floor Conference Room, Leonard L. Williams Justice Center

Attendees: Renee Ciconte & Commissioner Theresa Sedivec (co-chairs), Romie Griesmer (CJC staff), Capt. Pete Sawyer (DSP), Lt. Gerald Tatum (NCCPD), Liz Fillingame (OCA), Kathleen McCormick (OCA), Donna Pugh (YRS), Anthony Longo (DOJ), Lisa Minutola (ODS), Magistrate Cheryl McCabe-Stroman (JP Court); by Phone: Brie Gannon (SAC), Lynn Gedney (DELJIS), Addie Asay (Family Court), Judge Paula Ryan (Family Court), Josh Weber (CSG).

- I. Welcome and introduction by co-chairs Renee Ciconte & Theresa Sedivec. Attendees introduced themselves as well.
- II. Renee Ciconte gave a brief description of the grant goals: Improving Diversion, Expanding Civil Citation, Reducing DMC, and Improving Data Collection. Our committee will have two working groups: pre-arrest diversion and post-arrest diversion. Both of these groups will focus on DMC and data collection in their respective areas. Sign-up sheets for the two working groups will be passed around at the end of the meeting.

Renee also shared the Pennsylvania Youth Law Enforcement Curriculum that was recommended by SJJAC as a program to consider for DMC. Romie Griesmer added that the grant is aimed at keeping the youth at lowest risk outside the system in order to focus system resources on the youth that are at higher risk.

- III. Josh Weber from our TA provider, the Council on State Governments (CSG), gave a presentation about the technical assistance process, research on what works to improve outcomes for youth, and lessons learned from Texas.

Josh shared research that showed:

- keeping youth closer to home results in better outcomes,
- secure placement leads to higher recidivism rates for more serious crimes, and
- low risk youth should be kept out of the system (or have the lightest touch possible with the system) so that system resources can focus on the higher risk youth

Josh shared key takeaways from CSG's work in Texas:

- important to have robust and consistent diversion programs
- resources alone are not enough, must match youth with appropriate level of services
- data collection is vitally important in order to inform decision making

Josh shared questions that are important for us to ask in Delaware:

- Do we have consistent criteria to make pre-arrest diversion decision?
- Are consistent criteria used to make post-arrest diversion decisions?
- Do youth receive services matched with needs?

Josh described CSG as our staff who are here to help us. They are in the process of finalizing their assessment of our state including the focus groups and interviews they conducted as well as data they have been able to look at. They are here to support us in coming up with policy and practice changes. The states of Washington & Iowa also received this grant. These states are focusing on more than a strategic plan, including legislative, fiscal, policy/practice changes.

Josh stated the Core Principles of CSG:

1. Using validated risk/needs assessment tools.
There are tools that can be used at the front end which are static.
2. Implement and evaluate programs proven to reduce recidivism.
This is done through data collection and evaluation.
3. Collaborate Across Systems to Address Youth's Needs.
4. Tailor supervision/services to youth's developmental needs.
Youth & family driven approach; Restorative Justice Approach.

Josh shared that DMC issues are very challenging and gave the following suggestions:

- Data collection on DMC at different points in the system is essential
- Assessment tools are inherently objective
- Make sure services are culturally/linguistically appropriate and give equal access
- Collaborate across systems

Josh knows that CSG's recommendations in Delaware will include:

- Strengthening data infrastructure: we seem to have a fractured approach that is not well coordinated
- Structured decision making tools or consistent criteria in diversion decisions
 - How do we make sure that we are referring the right youth to diversion?
 - How are we making sure that services are matched to needs? (need to look at quality/outcomes)

CSG will take the following steps with our committee:

1. Complete their statewide assessment and present this at our May meeting. Josh noted that this can be made into a public event.
2. Provide support to our group in reviewing findings & developing recommendations.

3. Assist our group with developing an implementation plan based upon our recommendations.

Lisa Minutola asked how to defend when criticized as being “soft on crime?” Josh responded with the following:

1. Community offers better outcomes than incarceration.
2. Front end research is pretty compelling: low risk youth are not benefiting, giving services to these youth can actually increase recidivism rate.
3. Draw a distinction between who belongs in system vs. who should be held accountable for their actions (Iowa diverts 80% of youth).

IV. Renee Ciconte facilitated a discussion about priorities and next steps.

- We discussed the fact that not everyone knows about all of the diversion programs we have and what is offered in each county.
- Anthony Longo shared that Family Court has a technical assistance grant for Drug Court that may have an impact on diversion.
- Liz Fillingame and Romie Griesmer shared some familiarity with the teen court program in Kent County.
- Currently, the only pre-arrest program is civil citation. Should other programs be available pre-arrest?
- Delaware’s overall system structure was discussed. Should we implement a referral program?
- Should we have a screening tool (only static info used) and have identified low-risk kids diverted?
- Should we have first-offense misdemeanants diverted?
- Magistrate McCabe-Stroman shared that JP Court (sometimes) gets some type of assessment when police bring a youth into court.

V. Presentation of tentative meeting schedule

Our Task Force will next meet in May when CSG will present their assessment. Following this meeting, work groups will meet in June and July in order to develop recommendations based on the assessment. The task force will then come together again to develop consensus on policy and practice changes. Work groups will then meet in December and January in order to develop a strategic and implementation plans. By February, we should have strategic plan finalized and begin implementation. All along the way, we will keep JJAG informed and ask for their input on the policy and practice recommendations of our Task Force.

VI. Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:23pm.